

Message Text

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FOR EAGLEBURGER

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TAGS: SOPN, US, PINS

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT RICHARD WITKIN BY-LINER, NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, HEADED "'HARD LINE' AND HIJACKINGS (STATE DEPARTMENT ALTERING LONG-HELD POLICY, POSSIBLY TO DEFER CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT ROLE)" BEGIN TEXT:

2. THE WEEKEND HIJACKING TO PARIS OF A NEW YORK-TO-CHICAGO AIRLINER HAS ACCELERATED A PROCESS OF OFFICIAL RETHINKING ON HOW TO DEAL WITH TERRORISTS WHILE THE LIVES OF HOSTAGES ARE REGARDED TO BE IN JEOPARDY.

3. THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS EXPRESSING ITS LONG-HELD "HARD LINE" POLICY IN ALTERED TERMS, CONTENDING THAT THE OLD WAY OF STATING THE POLICY WAS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD. IN THE PAST, THE POLICY HAS WIDELY BEEN PUBLICIZED AS "WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS."

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4. A DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN ANTI-TERRORIST PLAN-

NING SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE PREFERRED WAY OF STATING THE POLICY WAS: "DO EVERYTHING TO EFFECT THE SAFE RELEASE OF HOSTAGES WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONCESSIONS."

5. THERE WAS SPECULATION IN THE AVIATION COMMUNITY THAT THE PUBLIC CHANGE IN EMPHASIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO HEAD OFF POSSIBLE CRITICISM ABOUT THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS IN THE MANEUVERING THAT ENDED THE MELODRAMA WITH NO DEATHS OR INJURIES TO ANY ONE ABOARD THE PLANE.

6. IT MUST BE CONSIDERED THAT, WHILE THE EVENTS WERE BEING PLAYED OUT AT THE PARIS AIRPORT, NO ONE BUT THE HIJACKERS COULD KNOW WHETHER THEY HAD THE DEVICES TO MAKE GOOD ON THREATS TO BLOW UP THE PLANE IF THEIR DEMANDS HAD NOT BEEN MET.

7. SEVERAL QUESTIONS WERE BEING ASKED ABOUT THE ROLE OF BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS.

8. WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS RAPID AND REALISTIC AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN? OR DID A MISUNDERSTOOD VIEW OF THE "WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE" STANCE CAUSE UNNECESSARY DELAYS THAT MIGHT HAVE LED TO TRAGEDY IF THE HIJACKERS HAD HAD LETHAL DEVICES AND HAD BEEN TRIGGER-HAPPY?

9. AS FOR THE FRENCH, WERE AUTHORITIES IN PARIS TOO QUICK TO INCAPACITATE THE TRANS WORLD AIRLINES PLANE? DID THEY CAUSE WHAT, UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES (ARMED HIJACKERS WITH DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS), MIGHT HAVE BEEN FATAL DELAYS IN FACILITATING COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE TERRORISTS?

10. IN SHORT, WHAT DEGREE OF TOUGH GOVERNMENTAL HANDLING WAS CALLED FOR IF THE ONLY REMAINING REQUIREMENT OF THE HIJACKERS WAS TO VERIFY THAT THEIR DEMAND HAD BEEN MET FOR DISSEMINATION OF THEIR MESSAGE IN DROPPED LEAFLETS AND NEWS COLUMNS?

11. THE CAPTAIN OF THE PLANE, RICHARD CAREY, PUT IT VERY SUCCINCTLY WHEN HE ASKED DURING TOWER-TO-COCKPIT RADIO EXCHANGES IN PARIS: "TELL ME, PLEASE, WHAT ARE WE BEING UNCLASSIFIED

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KILLED FOR?" A TAPE OF THE EXCHANGES WAS OBTAINED BY THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY.

12. AT ANOTHER POINT, THE CAPTAIN TOLD THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR, KENNETH RUSH, WHO WAS IN THE CONTROL TOWER: "ALL WE KNOW IS THAT THESE PEOPLE HAD A MESSAGE THAT THEY WANTED TO PUT IN THE PAPERS AND WANTED TO DROP LEAFLETS ON CITIES, AND FOR THIS YOU ARE ASKING THAT THIS WHOLE SHIP

FULL OF INNOCENT PEOPLE CAN BE KILLED TO PROVE THAT YOU CAN TAKE A STAND AGAINST TERRORISTS."

13. THE HARD-LINE APPROACH TO THE OVERALL PROBLEM OF AIR-LINE HIJACKING HAD RECEIVED ITS GREATEST PUBLIC ACCLAIM

AFTER THE ISRAELI COMMANDO RAID THAT FREED HOSTAGES AT UGANDA'S ENTEBBE AIRPORT EARLIER THIS YEAR.

14. BUT WAS ANY COMPARABLE GOVERNMENTAL TOUGHNESS CALLED FOR IN PARIS? IN THE END, IT WAS DECIDED IT WAS NOT, SINCE THE DEMANDS OF THE TERRORISTS WERE LIMITED. THEY WERE NOT ASKING THE RELEASE OF FELLOW TERRORISTS IN ISRAELI AND IN OTHER JAILS.

15. WHAT THEN CAN OFFICIALDOM, HERE AND ABROAD, LEARN FROM THE LATEST EPISODE IN THE COMPLEX, CONSTANTLY CHANGING, AND TOO FREQUENTLY TRAGIC HISTORY OF AERIAL HIJACKING?

16. THE DOMINANT VIEW AMONG AVIATION EXPERTS AT THE MOMENT IS THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN AN OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMED AND NORMALLY IMPLEMENTED POLICY OF TOUGHNESS WITH HIJACKERS. ANYTHING LESS WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE OTHER CRIMINALS.

17. BUT IT IS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO ADOPT TOO RIGID A STAND, MANY BELIEVE. A RIGID "WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE" STAND CAN BE MISINTERPRETED BY MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS TO MEAN "WE WILL NOT TALK." EVEN A POLICY OF "WE WILL NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS" SHOULD NOT BE ABSOLUTE -- HOW DO YOU DEFINE "CONCESSIONS"? IS THE DROPPING OF LEAFLETS THE KIND OF CONCESSION THAT WARRANTS RISKING DOZENS OF LIVES?
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18. IN SHORT, THE MAJORITY VIEW IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TALK AND USUALLY ACT TOUGH BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, SHOULD TREAT EACH CASE ON ITS OWN MERITS AT THE TIME.

19. THAT IS THE WAY, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THAT THE WEEK-END T.W.A. HIJACKING WAS HANDLED. EVEN WHILE A STRICT READING OF SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER'S "WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE" POSTURE WAS SLOWING STEPS OVERSEAS TO GAIN THE RELEASE OF THE PLANE'S PASSENGERS AND CREW, OTHER BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT WERE EXPERIENCING NO SUCH RIGIDITIES.

20. BOTH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AND THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, FOR INSTANCE, WERE URGING NEWSPAPERS TO COMPLY WITH THE HIJACKERS' DEMANDS FOR

PRINTING THE TEXT OF THEIR MANIFESTO FOR CROATIAN INDEPENDENCE FROM YUGOSLAVIA.

21. THE POLICY FAVORING TOUGHNESS WITH FLEXIBILITY WAS ENDORSED BY A SPOKESMAN FOR THE WEST GERMAN UNITED NATIONS DELEGATION, WHICH PLANS TO PROPOSE NEW MEASURES AGAINST

TAKING HOSTAGES WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETS LATER THIS MONTH.

22. IN GENERAL, YOU SHOULD TAKE A HARD LINE," HE SAID. "BUT DON'T SAY 'NEVER'. YOU CAN ALWAYS MAKE ROOM FOR SPECIAL CASES." END TEXT ROBINSON

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